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Rwanda: Peace Process Inches Forward

Peace accords signed by the ethnic Hutu-dominated Rwandan Government and Tutsi rebels on 4 August give the Tutsi minority a role in the country's future government and armed forces, but mutual distrust, financial shortfalls, and delays in deploying international peacekeepers threaten the peace process. A contentious protocol on the composition of a new military, which had delayed the talks over the past three months, was finally signed late last month. A broadbased transitional government that is supposed to be in place by 10 September will implement the political, humanitarian, and military agreements that comprise the accords.

International Forces To Buoy Transition but Delays Likely

In our judgment, the presence of international forces particularly those provided by the UN-will be key to holding the peace accord together and to a successful transitional period. Reports from the US Embassy in Kigali say that UN planners hope to form a Neutral International Force (NIF) of at least several hundred personnel and have it in place in central Rwanda before the transitional government is established. The NIF's role would be to monitor security during the transition, oversee disarmament of both sides, help create and train a new integrated military, and demobilize excess armed forces personnel. It would also safeguard humanitarian assistance, protect expatriates, and oversee the repatriation of refugees. The UN has not worked out the details for the NIF, however, and there have been no firm decisions on troop numbers. In addition, Russia is threatening to veto a UN resolution necessary to establish the NIF because of budget constraints and concerns about overextending UN peacekeeping efforts.

Moreover, confusion over the role of the UN and the OAU in Rwanda has not been resolved. The OAU, which views the peace accord as a success for its maiden efforts to resolve conflicts in Africa, plans to maintain a presence in Rwanda to bolster the peace

process and has reluctantly agreed to work with the UN to monitor the political transition. The OAU has had a 50-man Neutral Military Observer Group in Rwanda since last year, and also sent representatives to the peace talks in Arusha, Tanzania. In the future, the OAU plans to expand its forces to nearly 200 troops in central Rwanda, where they have observed the cease-fire between the two sides. The OAU force apparently would remain at least until the NIF arrived and, depending on the wishes of participating countries, elements of the force could be folded into the NIF. The OAU says it is open to remaining in Rwanda until six months after elections are held—supposedly no later than June 1995—but we believe it would be incapable of playing a wider role if NIF forces are not deployed.

Separate from the NIF, according to the Embassy, the UN is planning to send an 81-man force already approved by the UN Security Council—the UN Observer Mission for the Rwandan-Ugandan border (UNOMUR)—to ensure that no military support reaches the rebels from Uganda. Paris and Kigali have accused Kampala of supplying the rebels, who attacked Rwanda from southern Uganda in October 1990, with military support and safehavens. Nonetheless

the rebels have received daily truck loads of Ugandan military supplies since June. The rebel troops in late June fired on government forces who had begun to advance into northern rebel-controlled areas. Kampala recently signed an agreement giving the UN permission to station its forces in southern Uganda, paving the way for an advanced team to be dispatched within the next few weeks, Troop deployments are set to begin in 30 days, according to press reports. UNOMUR will be led by a Canadian general and will cost \$8.5 million for six months,

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Report Card on Issues

In negotiations that began June 1992, the government and the Tutsi rebels have agreed on:

Powersharing. Each side will get five cabinet seats . . . President Habyarimana, however, fears an alliance between the opposition parties and the rebels that could undermine his power.

Composition of Military. The accord calls for a 13,000-strong joint Army, with the rebels comprising 40 percent of the force and a 50-50 split for Army command levels above battalion... gendarmes will be 6,000 strong, some details unclear, rebel training to begin during transition... rebels will hold the gendarmes' Chief of Staff position.

Refugees. A protocol signed in June calls for their return within the next year . . . obstacles include World Bank cutback in funding to aid resettlement.

Other issues remain, however:

Displaced Persons. The safe return of the nearly 1 million displaced Rwandans will depend on a lasting peace accord and the deployment of neutral forces monitoring the demilitarized area between the forces.

Coalition for the Defense of the Republic. The Hutu supremacist group's role in the transitional government is vague... the Hutu hardliners initiated ethnic violence last January, which left nearly 80 dead and upset the peace process, leading to a resumption of fighting... they argue there can be no unity between the Hutus and the Tutsi, but want to play a role in the transitional government... have used civil disobedience and violence to protest the peace talks.

Makeup of the Transitional Government. The composition of the transitional government, which is to last 22 months, could prove problematic . . . recent infighting in the largest opposition party, Movement for a Democratic Rwanda (MDR), is causing a split between hardliners, which could cause a deadlock as cabinet ministers are chosen . . . MDR will have four cabinet seats.

Tutsi rebel leader

Kanyarengwe a NIF force of 500 to
1,000 troops must be sent immediately, particularly to
Kigali, to get the transitional government working and
to enable the nearly 1 million people displaced by the
war to return home. In addition, rebel leaders refuse to
go to Kigali until the two French battalions—deployed
to the capital during February's renewed fighting—
depart. The rebels also insist on bringing 600 of their
own troops to Kigali to be used as bodyguards. The
French indicate they will not leave Kigali until NIF
troops are deployed.

Both Sides Remain Skeptical

In our judgment, both parties to the peace accord are war weary, but they remain wary about the peace plan and prospects for its implementation. The next month will be crucial as both sides adopt a "wait-and-see" attitude toward the accord. Their distrust, compounded by inevitable delays in dispatching UN forces and hitches in implementation, could unravel the process and lead to renewed conflict. Meanwhile, when the transitional government takes shape,

President Habyarimana's power will be cut considerably and Hutn hardliners may want to reopen ostensibly settled issues, especially those on political powersharing. We believe the Coalition for Defense of the Republic—a Hutu supremacist group—will continue to be a threat to the transitional government

and peace process, particularly if the UN's deploy is delayed, possibly inciting ethnic tensions that o lead to a resumption in fighting.	ine ouk